

prisoned political agitators, suppressed free speech and free press. Whether we agree with the action of the council or not, the circumstances that led to these acts must be understood. The council acted as it did to save the revolution.

The revolutionary democracy emerged much weakened from the third period of the revolution. The counter-revolutionary activities of the imperialistic bourgeoisie, the uprising of the Bolsheviks and its suppression, the separatist movement of the various nationalities, notably Finland and Ukraine, the unfortunate offensive in Galicia and the triumphant march of Hindenburg have weakened the council and have strengthened the counter-revolutionary forces.

Forced as it was to sanction the prosecution of the war, it came out at the very beginning of the revolution with the formula, "No annexations and no indemnities."

To-day the council is still strong enough to control the situation. But every day of war weakens the chances of the revolution. From the beginning of the revolution, Russia has been struggling against a general peace, which no one desires. But Russia cannot go on fighting, for it must be remembered that the revolution itself was a protest against war, that it was fought by men and women who were tired of slaughter and exhausted with bloodshed. To them the end of the revolution means peace. It was clear that the agitation of the Bolsheviks owed its success to this sentiment among the people.

The realization of this fact, and the necessity of carrying on the war led the council to formulate its peace terms at the very beginning of the revolution in the words that have echoed and re-echoed the world over, "No annexations, no indemnities." The council hoped that the Allies would likewise clearly state their war aims and peace terms. It hoped that the Russian formula would force the Allies to abandon the idea of conquest, thus bringing the war to a close, or at least giving the Russian people a reason for fighting.

To-day the Russian knows that he has nothing to fight for. He knows that this is a war of conquest and imperialism and

from day to day the fight of the revolutionary democracy against separate peace grows increasingly difficult.

At the same time economic conditions in Russia are steadily going from bad to worse. The entire industrial system is breaking down, the transportation system has totally collapsed, and, as it seems, not even the American experts can help it during the war. The national debt is growing. Over three billion rubles must be raised annually alone for the payment of interest. Paper money to the value of twenty million rubles is being issued daily in order to meet current expenses. There is a shortage of foodstuffs, and, as a consequence, prices are soaring, people are growing more and more dissatisfied, are ready to blame anybody, respond readily to any call. Under such conditions the dark forces of counter-revolution are trying to lift their heads; the agents of the Kaiser and the agents of the Czar are doing their best to defeat the revolution; the imperialist bourgeoisie and reactionary generals of the "war to the finish" type are working hard to disrupt the unity of the revolutionary democracy and of the council.

At present a success of all these reactionary and counter-revolutionary activities seems doubtful, however. The council is still strong enough to cope with the situation and in suppression of counter-revolutionary outbreaks will have the support of all revolutionary elements of Russia. One cabinet may fall and another may rise, but the revolutionary democracy as represented by the council will still be the dominant factor in the political life of Russia until the meeting of the constituent Assembly, which is to solve the general problems of the revolution.

This does not mean that the meeting of the Constituent Assembly will bring permanent quiet, for the problems of the revolution are not of a nature that produce calmness. The war problem, the form of government and above all the land question cannot be solved to the satisfaction of all classes of society, and are of too great and vital importance to be solved by parliamentary means alone.

Judging by the present co-relation of forces in Russia the Constituent Assembly will have a large socialist majority. The